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SUBJECT: CONDEMNING SUICIDE BOMBING

REF: USUN 00184

1.(U) ACTION REQUEST para 4.

2.(SBU) As reported reftel, the Simon Weisenthal Center has been lobbying UN Missions to convene a Special Session of the General Assembly to condemn suicide bombing. Subsequent to their February 26 meeting with Amb. Khalilzad, representatives of the Center sent letters to a wide range of UN Missions asking for support for this effort. Even those delegations that are sympathetic to the idea of UN action to condemn such terrorist acts are skeptical about the proposal. Concern centers around the potential for politicizing the session and using it to criticize Israel, the U.S. and other states that some allege are responsible for creating conditions that lead to such desperate acts.

3.(SBU) Argentina, Australia and Italy received letters from the Weisenthal Center and are seeking U.S. views on an appropriate response. We have also been in contact with the Israeli Mission which, like USUN, supports action to condemn suicide bombing by terrorists but is not convinced that a special session would be the best forum to accomplish this objective. Special Sessions are relatively rare and require a request from the Security Council or a majority of the members of the United Nations. A better forum, could be the next regular session of the General Assembly under the agenda item, "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism", which is considered each year in the Sixth (Legal) Committee. This approach clears several hurdles because the item is already on the preliminary agenda and any delegation may propose a resolution under it. The goal would be to attract a significant number of co-sponsors representing all geographic regions to support adoption of the resolution by consensus.

4.(SBU) The Weisenthal Center has indicated that it will lower its profile on this initiative in order to give member states an opportunity to move it forward. Action Request: USUN seeks authorization to approach like minded delegations including those mentioned above, to urge them to take the lead in developing and proposing a resolution condemning terrorist suicide bombing, along the lines of the text below (para 5), for adoption during the next General Assembly in October/November 2008.

15. (SBU) Begin text.

General Assembly item XXX
"Measures to eliminate international terrorism"

The General Assembly,

Recalling resolution 60/288 of September 8, 2006, "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" and other relevant resolutions on measures to eliminate international terrorism,

Reaffirming that all acts, methods and practices of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever and by whomever committed,

Recalling also resolution 52/164 of December 15, 1997 which adopted the "International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings",

Noting that a significant majority of United Nations member states are party to that Convention, which calls upon them to criminalize terrorist bombings and either to extradite alleged offenders or submit such cases for prosecution,

Noting also that suicide bombers are often directed by perpetrators who manipulate others into carrying out terrorist acts while they themselves remain unharmed,

Expresses its concern that despite the efforts of the international community to combat this heinous form of terrorism, suicide bombings have increasingly resulted in the death and injury of countless victims;

¶1. Condemns, strongly and unequivocally, terrorist attacks by suicide bombers committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes;

¶2. Calls upon states to act in accordance with their international obligations to deny safe haven and to bring to justice any person who supports, facilitates, participates or attempts to participate in the financing, planning, preparation or perpetration of such suicide bombings;

¶3. Urges states that have not done so to consider becoming parties, without delay, to the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. End text.

KHALILZAD